

NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY AS A FLAGSHIP UNIVERSITY IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased to welcome participants of the Eurasian Higher Education Leaders Forum to Nazarbayev University. I believe events of lively communication and fruitful discussion like this among representatives of different countries can facilitate the search for innovations and the development of education. Our country has always given priority to the modernization of the national education system. The State Programme of Education Development for 2011-2020 lays out a clear vision of the future of the nation for the next ten years. Kazakhstan is a literate nation with an adept economics system and a highly qualified labor force. A competitive education system serves as a foundation for the future socio-economic and cultural prosperity of the country. A step-by-step road map for modernizing the national education system is laid out in the aforementioned State Programme of Education Development aimed at ensuring the availability of quality education as a factor contributing to sustainable economic growth.

The government of Kazakhstan considers the funding of the education system not merely as social expenditure, but rather as an economic investment. I hope that within the framework of this Forum, many interesting proposals on modernizing the Kazakhstani educational system will be developed further.

Dear colleagues and guests, it is a special pleasure for me that Nazarbayev University (NU), alongside its strategic partners representing world-class universities, can serve as a model to present Kazakhstan to international academe. We are actively studying international best practice and aim to become a center of educational and research expertise in Central Asia, the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), and Eurasia overall. A bright example of our aspirations is Nazarbayev University. Today, it forms a modern and innovative environment in Kazakhstan by mobilizing its scientific potential, leading international human resources, and talented youth of the country. Nazarbayev University is becoming the core of a new and innovative cluster of sites of higher education.

For the purpose of realizing the first stage of the cluster, a Commercialization Office, a Business Incubator, and a Piloting Techno Park have already been established with an industrial, high-tech layout. National and international companies will provide the opportunity to locate their own infrastructure for the production and research areas of this layout. The selection of the companies will be based on their cooperation with the research centers of Nazarbayev University and the priorities of industrial development of Kazakhstan.

A large number of interesting projects are emerging as a joint effort of the international faculty and young scholars of Nazarbayev University, all of whom obtained their education at the best engineering universities in the world. This University is still very young. However, within a short period of time, Nazarbayev University has managed to build an efficient system for promoting innovative ideas by scholars.

The strategic plans of Nazarbayev University have been approved for the years of 2013-2020, and this event has heralded a new stage in the University's development. The strategy defines the main long-term objectives and directions for their realization to ensure the dynamic development of the University in becoming a significant model of quality education as an exemplar for other institutions of the country.

The main objective of the University is to prepare professional scientists, managers and entrepreneurs that are required for the sustainable development of Kazakhstan as well as the development of the capital city as a center of knowledge and innovation. In order to ensure collegiality, and transparency of the educational policy of the University in accordance with international practice, collegial bodies such as the Academic Council, Research Council, and Faculty Council have been created.

Beginning from the last year, the University, with the Ministry of Education and Science, has started working on the concept of transferring the University's expertise in higher education management to other higher educational institutions of the country. With that in mind, the University will be transferring its expertise not only in the field of academic governance, but also in terms of innovation in research and development with a focus on the transfer of science.

For Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev University is an experiment that allows the government to reform the existing university structures and create new higher educational institutions. It is not accidental that even today's event has been specially organized by Nazarbayev University.

Dear participants, in this Forum, raising the quality of human capital is an important priority in our country. It is specifically our stake holding in the investment in the development of our future generations that will allow us to develop a competitive nation. Competition, in its turn, is necessary for the formation of an innovative economy. I hope that such forums will become a lasting tradition and lay meaningful grounds for the exchange of cutting-edge expertise and ideas in terms of raising the quality of education in Eurasia in correspondence with best international practices. I wish you a constructive dialogue, efficiently deployed effort, and interesting discussions.

Thank you for your attention.